

teachers. For new elementary teachers, States must have a test in place to assess subject-area knowledge in the key subjects in the standard elementary school curriculum. Further, for new middle and high school teachers, a State must either test content knowledge or require those teachers to have a college major, a major equivalent, or an advanced degree or credential, in each subject taught, in order to be considered highly qualified. If a State has charter schools, teachers who teach in these schools must have bachelor's degrees and must demonstrate subject-area competence in the same manner as other teachers do before they can be considered highly qualified, but certification requirements can be waived, if permitted by State law. For teachers of special education, States must meet the requirements established in Section 602(10) of IDEA.

The Department has released and periodically updated non-regulatory guidance explaining the HQT provisions, visited every State to provide technical assistance in implementing the provisions, and, thus far, monitored over 30 States' implementation of these provisions. As a result, we are confident that States understand and can faithfully implement the law, set satisfactory definitions of "highly qualified," and make accurate determinations of which teachers meet or do not meet the HQT requirements.

As a second requirement, States and districts must provide parents and the public with accurate, complete reports on the number and percentage of classes in core academic subjects taught by highly qualified teachers. States and districts must provide these data to parents through school, district, and State report cards. In addition, parents of students in schools receiving Title I funds must be notified that they may receive information regarding the professional qualifications of their children's teachers upon request, and they must be notified if their children have been assigned to or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. We will monitor States' procedures for ensuring that districts implement fully the parents' "right to know" standards.

Complete and accurate reporting of HQT data to the Department is the third requirement. In January 2006, States must submit complete and accurate data to the U.S. Secretary of Education on their implementation of the HQT requirements as part of their Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR). In addition to reporting the number and percentage of core academic classes being taught by highly qualified teachers in all schools, States must report on the number and percentage of core academic classes being taught in "high-" and "low-poverty" schools. In addition, they must have plans in place to ensure that disadvantaged and minority students are not taught by teachers who are not highly qualified at greater rates than other students. States must also provide additional information in the CSPR that describes the types of classes that still do not have a highly qualified teacher (see enclosure). Accurate data will ensure that teachers and principals know which teachers need additional support and will enable policymakers to determine whether or not resources are being used effectively to address real problems. States that do not submit the required HQT data as part of the CSPR in a timely manner will be out of compliance.

The fourth requirement is that States take action to ensure that inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers do not teach poor or minority children at higher rates than other children. The Department, through its State monitoring, is reviewing the steps States are taking to ensure that highly qualified and experienced teachers are distributed equitably between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers. Given the evidence that teachers are a critical factor in improving student achievement, it is in the best interest of each State to ensure that students who need the most academic support receive instruction from the most effective teachers. The Department will determine whether or not each State is making a good-faith effort in this area.

#### **DATA-BASED PLANNING AND SUPPORT**

Findings from our monitoring visits and discussions with State officials indicate that States have the capacity to report accurately, in the CSPR, on the status of their teachers' qualifications. The Department will offer a series of regional data workshops to support States in collecting the additional data on teachers who are not highly qualified that must be submitted in the January 2006 CSPR. States are accountable for producing complete and accurate data on the qualifications of their teaching forces and for using the data to identify areas that pose persistent challenges to having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. The Department will monitor and verify the accuracy of the CSPR data throughout February and March of 2006.

After the States submit their CSPR data in January 2006, the Department will carefully review the accuracy of the data and determine each State's progress in meeting the HQT goal. If a State is falling short of the HQT goal, but meets all four of the requirements discussed above, the Department will request that the State submit, by May 31, 2006, a revised plan, based on its data, for reaching the HQT goal in the 2006-07 school year.

We know that there are circumstances in which having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom will be a continuing challenge to many States and districts, including, but not limited to, small rural schools, self-contained special education classes, and hard-to-fill advanced secondary courses. For some States and districts, the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will also have a significant and lingering impact on this work, and the Department will certainly take that into consideration. The revised plan should include detailed